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**FRIENDS AT THE GATE: WHY TURKEY MATTERS IN U.S. AND EUROPEAN
SECURITY**

By

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A paper submitted to the faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the Department of Joint Military Operations.

The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College or the Department of the Navy.

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Abstract

FRIENDS AT THE GATE: WHY TURKEY MATTERS IN U.S. AND EUROPEAN SECURITY

A lingering post-Cold War ignorance of the geo-strategic importance of Turkey as a U.S., European, and NATO ally may risk long-term Turkish ambivalence or even animosity toward the both the U.S. and Europe. Given the changed nature of our relations with Turkey, the U.S. can no longer take Turkish partnership, confined to the prism of NATO, or our ability to confront Iraq or other adjacent areas as a given, nor should we assume we can “buy” Turkish support when it is convenient.

Turks increasingly see their relations with the west in a triangular way with competing pressures between Turkish, EU, and U.S. interests. They feel the pressure, are aware of the souring in Turkish-American relations, and may find it increasingly difficult to harmonize their interests with the U.S and EU if they can’t balance the divergent pressures from each. The DoD and EUCOM would be wise to study the Turks more closely, understand their intense nationalism, growing domestic democratic influence, fear of an independent Kurdish state on their border, and their strong national security interest in EU membership. Accordingly, the EUCOM Commander in conjunction with DoD and DoS will need to assertively engage both Turkey and the EU together to include development of Theater Security Cooperation Plans (TSCP) that factor in the influence of the EU along with Turkish security interests.

INTRODUCTION

A lingering post-Cold War ignorance of the geo-strategic value of Turkey as a U.S., European, and NATO ally may risk long-term Turkish ambivalence or even animosity toward the U.S. and Europe. Given the changes in the geo-strategic security environment after the Cold War and the changed nature of our bilateral and multilateral relations with Turkey, including increasingly nationalist Turkish security interests, it should have been predictable by the U.S. Department of State (DoS), Department of Defense (DoD), U.S. European Command (EUCOM), and U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) that Turkey would have a strong tendency toward denying the use of bases and territory for staging U.S. air and ground forces in preparation for an offensive operation against Iraq (Operation IRAQI FREEDOM).

Although modern Turkey does not qualify for great nation status today, the Turks do want recognition as being strategically important to both Europe and the U.S. along with an acknowledged place in the European Union (EU) and NATO. These potentially competing desires and interests placing Turkey between the U.S. and EU may grow and introduce more friction into the triangular Turkey/EU/U.S. relationship as the EU grows and institutionalizes a Common Foreign Security Policy (CFSP), diplomatic power, and corresponding defense initiatives independent of NATO. The Turks increasingly see their future security interests much more closely linked with the EU than the U.S., fear being left out, and if forced to choose, may choose the EU over the U.S.

The U.S. national and theater-strategic levels of command (EUCOM) must recognize that the Turks have strong emerging nationalist tendencies, are committed to the goal of EU membership as part of their strategic calculus, and consider the prevention of an independent

Kurdistan on their border to be a vital national security interest. Accordingly, both EUCOM and CENTCOM must comprehend the theater-strategic and associated operational implications including basing strategy and contingency planning for both EUCOM and the support of CENTCOM. With decades of growing Turkish nationalism and democracy, Turkish dislike of Incirlik based U.S. operations against Iraq (Gulf War 1 and NORTHERN WATCH), and associated fears of a potential Kurdish state on their border, it was highly likely that the Turks might reject a U.S. request for unilateral non-NATO operations in a pre-emptive attack through northern Iraq from Turkish territory. Given this background, the DoD, EUCOM, and CENTCOM should not have assumed even in the slightest way that Turkish bases at Incirlik, the port of Iskenderun, or Turkish territory would be accessible to the U.S. Indeed, a well known RAND author and regional expert, Dr. Stephen Larrabee warned in 2000 that “it would be unwise for the United States to assume that Turkish bases will be available to the United States except in circumstances where Turkish territory or Turkish interests are directly threatened.”¹

Despite the OIF experience and from a long-range perspective, U.S. geo-strategic interests would still be better served with Turkey in the EU rather than outside it, and the U.S. national and theater-strategic levels of command should adapt their Theater Security Cooperation Plans (TSCP) accordingly. Continued delay of Turkey's bid for EU membership on the other hand, and ignorance of Turkey's strategic importance in an increasingly complex and uncertain environment, risks Turkish reactions that could make base access even more difficult. Therefore, the U.S. will need to assertively engage both the EU and Turkey together to include development of TSCP's that factor in the influence of the EU along with Turkish security interests. If the EU and U.S. are geo-strategically better aligned, the Turks may be

more inclined to follow despite Ataturk's isolationist legacy of peace at home and peace abroad.²

Ultimately, there are three important features of Turkish national security that factor into their strategic calculus: achieving EU membership; preventing an independent Kurdish state on their border; and strong nationalism linked with emerging domestic influence and democratic governance. Today, the U.S. can not rely on our previous Cold War relationship with Turkey. Therefore, studying and understanding the related history, aspirations, and evolving Turkish interests are more essential now to theater-strategic engagement in the wake of Operation IRAQI FREEDOM and the failure to obtain Turkish support.

GEO-STRATEGIC SETTING

Geo-strategic Position and Security Interests. Positioned astride three key regions, Europe, the Middle East, and the Transcaucasus, Turkey qualifies as a "pivot" state more than worthy of U.S. and European attention. Associated geo-political discussion involves whether Turkey is European, Asian, or Middle Eastern. Realistically, Turkey is not quite Middle Eastern, not quite Asian, and not quite European. Turkey is instead a land-bridge between three regions and the historic confluence of cultures, conflicts, cooperation, and competition between these regions. Out of this rich history, post-Ottoman Turkey emerged as a unique geopolitical entity that doesn't fit neatly inside one or another regional conception. It is quite simply Turkey; a pivotal state between larger regions.

In 1887 Halford J. Mackinder posited the concept of the pivot area of Euro-Asia in which he characterized Turkey along with four other states as comprising the inner crescent of the Euro-Asia land mass.³ The associated quandary over whether Turkey is European or Asian was perhaps partially answered by Lord Kinross who opined that the Anatolian plateau

being within the ring of the Taurus Mountains is Asia Minor, while the coastal exterior is European or what he calls “Europa Minor, geographically a fourth shore of Europe.”⁴ More recently, Zbigniew Brzezinski claimed Eurasia is the world’s axial super continent and decisive geopolitical chessboard. Within this context, he depicted Turkey within greater Europe and suggested the U.S. should not alienate Turkey, and strive to ensure they don’t feel like European outcasts lest they turn to radical Islam.⁵ In other words, Turkey should be looked at as a geo-strategically important partner to both the U.S. and Europe in dealing with Eurasian and Middle Eastern issues like stability, energy security, and economic integration. In a similar manner, F. Stephen Larrabee and Ian O. Lesser also characterized Turkey as a pivot state adjoining three important areas namely; the Balkans, the Caspian region, and the Middle East. Furthermore they claim Turkey qualifies as a pivot state par excellence with the added criteria of having the capacity to affect regional and international stability with a geo-strategic weight of 67.8 million people, projections for 100 million by mid-century, and the largest population in Europe by 2050.⁶ Therefore, Turkey as a pivotal state can have positive or negative consequences for Europe, Asia, and the Middle East depending on economic, political, religious, and foreign policy behaviors.⁷

The pivotal state concept theorizes the collapse of such states could cause regional chaos and conflict on one hand, while on the other; their success could stabilize the political, economic, and military security of a larger region.⁸ This concept, coupled with Turkey’s large burgeoning population and a fragile economy, clearly qualifies Turkey as a pivotal state from both a U.S. and European security perspective while “a prosperous, democratic, tolerant Turkey could become a beacon for several regions.”⁹ Turkey is in a tough neighborhood. To the west, the Balkans and the Aegean still require stabilization while the Ukraine and other

EU and NATO aspirants adjoin Turkey in land and sea areas to the north and northeast. Russia still borders Turkey in the Black Sea along with unstable buffer states to Turkey's east in the Transcaucasus. For these reasons, Europeans also view Turkey not just as a bridge, but as a barrier between Europe, the Middle East, and the Transcaucasus. Thus Turkey has in effect become a frontline state. As such, the EU should embrace and cultivate Turkish membership in the EU with a strategy that stability in Turkey is good for European and Euro-Atlantic (U.S.) security interests.

Syria, Iraq, and Iran also adjoin Turkey and still sponsor terrorism or have ongoing terrorist activities. Meanwhile, Turkey's security and trading relationship with Israel is evolving into a new partnership with geo-strategic implications. For example, the two states recently concluded an agreement for Israel to purchase 50 million cubic meters of water per year from Turkey for 20 years.¹⁰ To Turkey's southeast, stabilization operations in Iraq may go on for years and Turkey's deeply held security interest in controlling the PKK and Kurdish nationalism has in the past, does now, and will continue to take precedence over U.S. strategic interests and objectives in the area. Moreover, Turkish control of the Euphrates and Tigris could become a source of conflict if not managed cooperatively.

In the Transcaucasus, ethnic conflicts have for centuries been a source of friction between Russia and Turkey in the heyday of competing empire interests in addition to competition in the Balkans, Crimea, and the Turkish straits.¹¹ More recently, Turkey's role as a pivotal state was discussed in the role of a land bridge for future oil and gas pipelines from the Transcaucasus. Gareth M. Winrow noted this status revolves around whether Turkey becomes this key land bridge or instead becomes an energy supplicant to the Russian and Central Asian suppliers of oil and gas.¹² The construction of pipelines out of the Caspian oil

and gas fields from Baku, Azerbaijan to Ceyhan, Turkey are also in the strategic interests of Europe, the U.S., and Turkey.¹³ Despite Turkish cooperation with Russia on the ambitious Bluestream natural gas pipeline under the Black Sea, Russia will continue to view Turkey through the prism of Turkish membership in NATO.¹⁴

On a politico-military level the U.S. frequently identifies Turkey as an element of Europe noting Turkey's future geopolitical directions and actions will have a major impact on Europe and the U.S.¹⁵ Identifying Turkey with Europe is consistent with the fact that the U.S. has long worked with the Turks as a NATO member and on a bilateral level as part of specific U.S. national military strategy interests to include the basing of U.S. military forces. In summary, Henry Kissinger said it best, "For the West, the pivotal country is Turkey, the strongest military power in the region, allied to the West, friendly to Israel, and, because of the indispensability of its geography, important to all the contending forces."¹⁶

Caught Between Iraq and a Hard Place (U.S. and EU). EU membership has long been a goal of successive Turkish governments and they strongly believe Turkey should be a "full member of the EU sooner rather than later."¹⁷ Along this line, the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs states quite flatly, "Historically, geographically, and economically, Turkey is a European country."¹⁸ Right or wrong, the Turkish government believes their future geopolitical identity is in the EU and the DoD and EUCOM should pay more attention to the security implications of this issue. In addition to pursuing full EU status, Turkey is also seeking one of the non-permanent member seats allocated to the Western European and Other States Group (WEOG) UN Security Council seats for the 2009-2010 term stating, "the Government of Turkey attaches utmost importance to this candidature which is based on Turkey's unwavering commitment to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United

Nations.”¹⁹ For the U.S. and EU, an economically stable and democratic Turkey would be a strong ally in several unstable regions. The Turks should be viewed in this light and Turkish membership should be fostered as being in our long-term security interests. The reverse of delaying EU entry is instead a potentially dangerous course of action. Prime Minister Erdogan’s statements that “Turkey has been waiting at the gates of the EU for 40 years, but countries that applied only 10 years ago are almost becoming members ...”²⁰ reveals a potential danger signal. If Turkey begins a shift away from secular democracy toward Islamic government, the results for the stability of Europe, the eastern Mediterranean, the Middle East, Central Asia, and NATO could be problematic if not catastrophic. Such an outcome might damage U.S. and EU security interests for decades.

Turkish Nationalism and Preventing Kurdish Autonomy. Ataturk’s long-standing mantra and legacy of peace at home and peace abroad remains firmly embedded in Turkish foreign policy buttressed by the military. Turkey’s path certainly has been periodically interrupted by economic peaks and valleys as well as military interventions with the widely held view that Turkish military leaders see themselves as the purist defenders of Ataturk’s vision.²¹ Retrospectively, strong Turkish military influence through the constitutionally legal Turkish National Security Council was probably unavoidable and even necessary in maintaining the quasi-democratic and secular orientation of the young Republic. Despite periodic coups, the Turkish military always returned to barracks in favor of an elected civilian leader. The point is the Turkish General Staff (TGS) currently run by General Ozkok, dominates the Turkish National Security Council and remains the driving force of Turkish security interests. Eric Rouleau notes that despite the continued residual power of the Turkish Pashas (Generals) via the National Security Council, the “EU has not suggested that the NSC

be abolished, but only that it be transformed into an informal and extra-constitutional consultative body with a civilian majority.”²² However, the TGS remains highly suspicious of any foreign activity, particularly involving the Kurds, and especially the U.S. support of the Kurds in northern Iraq. During the Cold War, such issues were subordinated to a NATO driven practical view that keeping Turkey firmly in the Western bloc and preserving the integrity of the Turkish state as an ally was much more important than preserving the democratic regime.²³

The Turks see themselves as being important in their own right, but do the U.S. and the EU recognize that adequately? In the long-run, if both the U.S. and the EU don’t shore up relations with Turkey, the Turks could slip into a cultural identity backlash and be even less cooperative on security issues. All of these issues were knowable and had important implications for U.S. theater engagement, military planning, and the politico-military and military to military enabling actions necessary for obtaining support for OIF. The operational impact of possibly insufficient engagement at higher levels of command on one hand and invalid assumptions on the other were significant for the planning and execution of OIF. The foregoing raises questions about the viability of national and theater-strategic engagement of the Turks. Turkey is militarily vital in terms of space, time, and force and the relationship could have been fostered more assertively and collaboratively.

OIF AND THE NORTHERN OPTION: TURKEY IN SPACE, TIME, AND FORCE

From a spatial perspective, Turkey fits the characteristics of a semi-isolated or peninsular position²⁴ with the Black, Aegean, and Mediterranean Seas adjoining three sides along with the strategic advantage of dominating one of the most important international straits in history, the Turkish straits. In this context, Turkey “lies both astride and flanks sea

lines of communication to the respective enclosed or semi-enclosed sea.”²⁵ Perhaps more importantly, the Turkish southeastern geography belatedly became a magnet in U.S. military planning requirements for access in order to enable freedom of action for contingencies in Iraq. Unfortunately, the lingering post-Cold War ignorance of Turkey’s geo-strategic value is only beginning to die out at the middle-Europe centric EUCOM, and in the wake of the shock given to the U.S. Department of Defense by Turkey’s rejection of U.S. requests for using Incirlik and the port of Iskenderun to plan, prepare, and execute a northern axis of attack into Iraq.

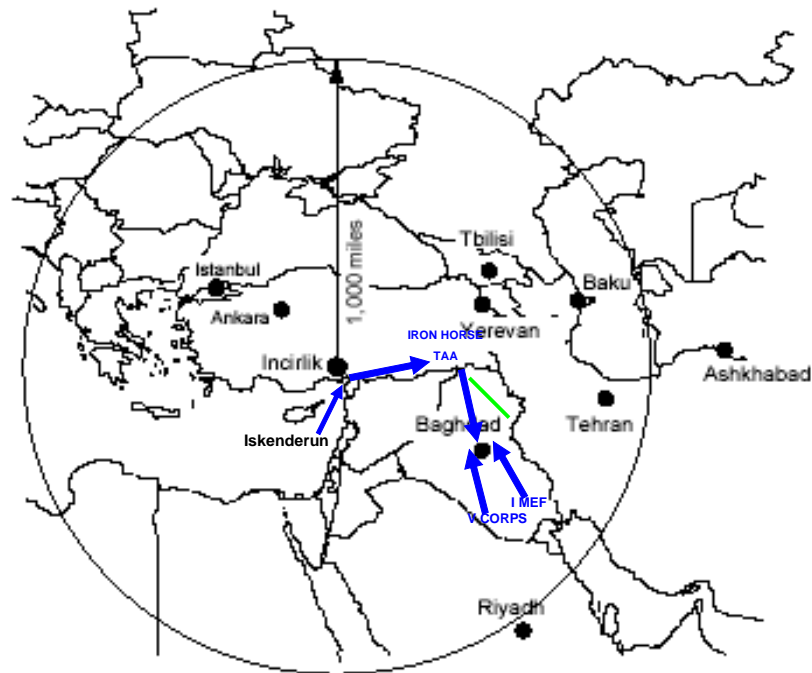
All it took to unravel this important military planning and the loss of a corps equivalent of combat power potential with its ripple effect from theater-strategic to operational to tactical levels was a handful of Turkish parliament abstentions on 01 March 2003 tipping the balance against the U.S. request and a democratic Turkish government decision to say no.²⁶ But what set the conditions for this operational friction in preparation for war was U.S. failure at the interactive seam between the national and theater-strategic levels of command to successfully perform the key functions of obtaining diplomatic clearance and over-flight rights negotiated or arranged by a number of friendly countries for the strategic deployment of forces, to coordinate interagency and multinational cooperation, and to maintain alliance and regional relations.²⁷ Regardless of Turkish complicity, the facts are the U.S. national and theater-strategic levels of command failed to fulfill these essential politico-military enabling actions. Turkish hesitance should have been predictable and anticipated by the DoS, DoD, EUCOM and CENTCOM. It should have been countered by a stronger, earlier, and more assertive and collaborative politico-military approach with the Turks. Alternatively, rather than take risks with strategically invalid assumptions of access to sovereign Turkish territory,

other deployment options might have been considered to include earlier sequencing of the 4th ID into Kuwait. The politico-military features and historical trends were predictable and should have been dealt with one way or the other.

When Turkey disapproved the U.S. request for use of Incirlik Airbase, the Port of Iskenderun, and staging areas for the 4th ID, there were a series cascading effects from operational to tactical which degraded CENTCOM operational capabilities by: loss of a major line of operations (LOO); loss of a double envelopment option striking toward Baghdad; loss of the combat power potential of a Corps equivalent in combined arms strength for the duration of combat operations (OIF Phase 3); temporary loss of fighter, Intelligence Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR), and tanker aircraft from Incirlik Airbase; delay of the arrival of the 4th ID; nearly lost potential for fixing 10 – 13 Iraqi Divisions in northern Iraq; lost potential for rapidly closing Iraqi escape routes to Syria; overloading of Ash Shuaibah port with 4th ID shipping; and delay in Reception, Staging, Onward Movement, and Integration (RSOI).

The loss of Incirlik as a Main Operating Base (MOB) for USAF fixed wing aircraft in OIF diminished the availability of the number of combat and support aircraft that could be launched in strike and refueling packages over Iraq. This was important because the range from Incirlik and other Turkish bases like Diyarbakir²⁸ to Baghdad is much shorter than from other Forward Operating Bases (FOBs) in some parts of Saudi Arabia and other parts of the CENTCOM theater (Qatar, Oman, Bahrain). Figure one illustrates the range from Incirlik to the theater as well as the Task Force IRON HORSE (4th ID and 1st ID) line of communication (LOC) from Iskenderun²⁹ to the Tactical Assembly Area (TAA) run by enabling elements of the 1st ID, and the intended axis of attack southward.

Figure 1. THEATER GEOMETRY AND PLANNED AXES OF GROUND ATTACK.³⁰



If Incirlik Airbase and others had been accessible, the number of sorties flown could have been increased. This planned line of operations (LOO) would also have positioned TF IRON HORSE to strike through and destroy some of the estimated ten to thirteen Iraqi Divisions (particularly Republican Guard forces) in northern Iraq while bypassing others along the Green Line of Kurdish control. CENTCOM also had to move quickly to rearrange basing of fixed-wing ISR aircraft and refueling tankers at other FOB's in the Mediterranean and Middle East to compensate for the loss of Incirlik. Precious time was also lost with the 38 ships holding the major equipment of the 4th ID because they were held in static positions in the eastern Mediterranean for three weeks and when it was clear the Turks would not support operations, these ships were belatedly redirected through the Suez Canal at an additional cost of \$20 million just for the charges at the canal. It took another

three weeks for all of them to sail into the Persian Gulf, another two to three weeks to offload at Ash Shuaibah in Kuwait, and the 4th ID equipment was further delayed due to the lack of Heavy Equipment Transporters (HET) and other trucks to move the 4th ID up from the Joint Rear Area.³¹ The latter situation was compounded by the fact that the 1st ID enabling force (ARFOR-T) had many of the HET's and other trucks (nearly 1200 total) already in Mardin near the TAA 500 miles east of Iskenderun prior to full approval by the Turkish government to allow offensive combat operations from Turkey.³² Consequently, the ground transport and other forms of logistics to include 2000 containers of ammunition and a fuel bladder site to support TF IRON HORSE were out of play for the remainder of major combat operations (Phase 3 of OIF) since they could not be moved in time to support operations in the south.

The loss of a northern LOO had a net negative operational effect and choosing an LOO should be one of the Combatant Commander (COCOM) and supporting COCOM's most fundamental tasks in planning at any level of war.³³ However, one of the qualifiers for establishing an LOO is first and foremost access, and access to the territory of another sovereign nation, especially an ally with strong nationalist interests, should not be assumed in military planning when there is ample evidence to indicate political approval won't be easy. Yet this is what did occur at the theater-strategic levels of command and especially the national-strategic level of command. The original plan would have had two LOOs approaching Baghdad from completely different directions thus causing the Iraqis, operating from a central position, to spread their forces for a multi-directional threat. Unfortunately, the planning at several levels did invalidly assume access to Turkish bases.³⁴ Later, as a means of mitigating the effects of this mistake, the 173rd Airborne Brigade (the Green Line) and the

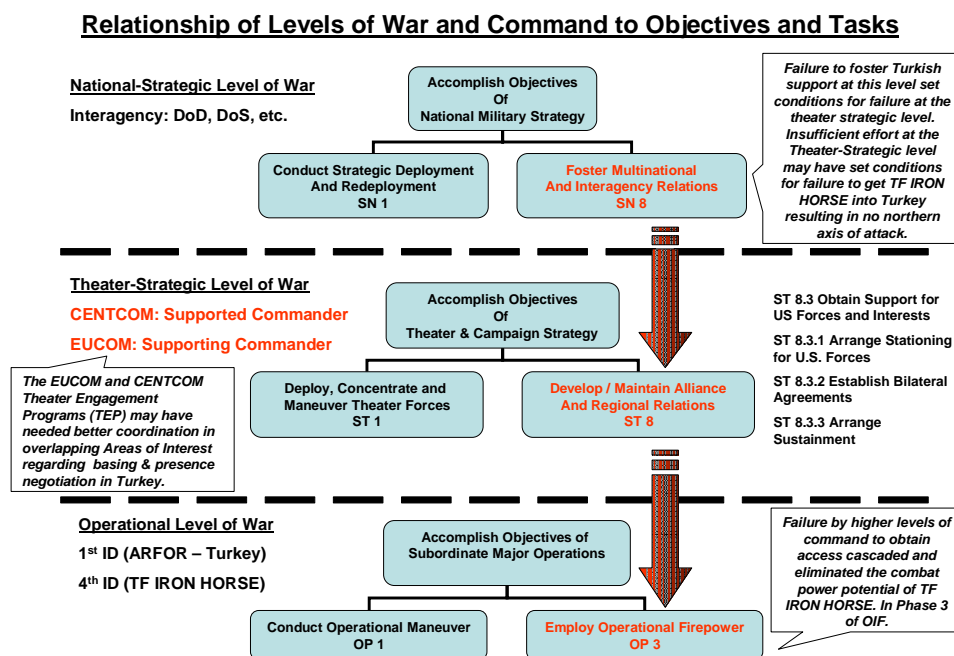
26th MEU (Mosul) were instead air-landed to provide at least a credible force in northern Iraq in order to distract some Iraqi forces and fix them in place.

Underpinning much of this higher level invalid assumption-based planning was a fundamental lack of understanding and underestimation of Turkish national interests and culture by the theater-strategic and national levels of command e.g. both CENTCOM and EUCOM in regard to the former and DoD in regard to the latter. It was these levels of command that were responsible for setting the enabling conditions of access in conjunction with DoS officials and the Turks. More importantly, these levels of command should have recognized the politico-military evidence that indicated a high degree of risk the Turks might reject the request. Instead of placing such strong emphasis on a northern attack force, there might instead have been better alternatives or branch plans for the deployment and RSOI of the 4th ID through other locations in the south or at least to partially deploy some elements by air in the north.

There is some evidence that indicates the level of U.S. politico-military and military to military engagement and negotiation with the Turks in the period leading to OIF was insufficient on one hand, and at times, inappropriately low on the other. Firstly, if as the President's National Security Strategy indicates, the United States requires bases and stations within and beyond Western Europe and Northeast Asia, as well as access arrangements for the long-distance deployment of U.S. forces and access to distant theaters,³⁵ the critical implied tasks to the DoS and DoD (national-strategic) and Combatant Commanders (theater-strategic) are the fostering of multinational relations and maintenance of alliance relations as vital enablers in setting the conditions for strategic deployment. In turn the ability of the theater commander (COCOM) to concentrate and maneuver theater forces for positional

advantage against an adversary sets the conditions to enable operational maneuver and employment of firepower by operational and tactical commanders. Without successful enabling actions by higher and parallel levels of command, the cascade effect of successive failures can greatly impede the effectiveness and diversity of operational planning and execution. Figure two illustrates these interlocking relationships and the manner in which failures cascaded and impeded the operational effectiveness of CENTCOM through the loss of the combat power potential of TF IRON HORSE and a northern front.

Figure 2. NATIONAL & THEATER-STRATEGIC ENGAGEMENT RELATIONSHIPS.



Note. Adapted from CJCSM 3500.4C Universal Joint Task List and 3113.01A Theater Engagement Program.

Throughout the run up to OIF, the national and theater-strategic leadership periodically discussed the importance of access to allied nations for basing and to Turkey specifically for a northern front as early as February 2002, even lamenting in August 2002 the lateness of

engaging and seeking Turkish support. Yet by January 2003 the leadership was still discussing a northern front in the context, “if” the Turks would approve.³⁶ By late February 2003 and just a mere few weeks before a Turkish parliamentary vote and the planned beginning of U.S. combat operations, Secretary of State Powell in a NSC meeting was purportedly doubtful noting that moving a large ground force through Turkey would require drastic renegotiation of agreements, and further noted “I don’t think we can get it and we’re taking a risk at losing it all by going for that.”³⁷ Secretary Rumsfeld and General Franks reportedly still deemed Turkish access essential even at this late point.

The foregoing raises some questions about the sufficiency of politico-military and military to military diplomacy on the part of the national and theater leadership in enabling access for U.S. forces and freedom of action for operational execution. Philip Gordon and Gordon Shapiro claim President Bush failed to sufficiently engage Turkey and instead alienated the Turks. They further noted that diplomacy was inadequate at the cabinet level especially. Additionally, they indicate that unlike former Secretary of State Baker who aggressively pursued allied support for the first Gulf War with 41 visits to foreign countries, Secretary Powell on the other hand made only one trip to Europe and did not go to Turkey at all “whose support for an eventual war was as critical as it was uncertain.”³⁸ More particularly, where were EUCOM and CENTCOM in their roles for Turkish engagement and what were they doing? The open source evidence is limited but potentially indicative of insufficient engagement, possibly inadequate coordination between COCOM’s, and perhaps delegated too far. General Jones, COMEUCOM, has been frequently quoted about the need to transform toward more expeditionary basing he refers to as lily pads. But even lily pads in foreign countries require host-nation political roots to sustain them. Jones has been further

quoted saying, “the geo-strategic center of interest for the alliance [NATO] is in the greater Middle East.”³⁹ The most logical ally would be Turkey then. On 03 March 2003, General Jones attended a press briefing where he discussed the Turks and the northern front option. When pressed about what the GOT denial of U.S. access meant for EUCOM he replied,

It means ... the dialogue will go on between the United States and Turkey at the diplomatic level, at the highest levels. We as the military community, that were moving in a certain direction will have to wait and see how the diplomatic dialogue resolves itself ... We have been actively engaged for several months now in trying to work out the modalities of a basing construct in southern Turkey ...⁴⁰

If negotiations had only started several months prior to March, they were probably at least several months late. Interestingly, negotiations with the Turks was also conducted with limited senior U.S. military leadership i.e. flag officers, yet negotiations involved the Turkish General Staff, military generals who are very rank conscious, sensitive to perceived slights, and who traditionally have had the most influence in Turkish foreign policy by virtue of running the Turkish National Security Council. In hind-sight, more senior U.S. military representation might have been helpful and should have been included.⁴¹ Mistakes were made on both sides, but the U.S. took a Turkish “yes” for granted. For their part, the Turks believed on one hand that we would not go to war without their support, and on the other invalidly assumed support would be approved in Parliament anyway.⁴² Potentially compounding the situation further included the fact that CENTCOM periodically sent a team of officers (mainly Colonels) to negotiate with the Turks⁴³ instead of EUCOM whose Area of Responsibility (AOR) includes Turkey. Furthermore, the 1st ID, a tactical level subordinate command of USAREUR, deployed a team to Turkey after Christmas 2002 to develop a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the GOT and the U.S. for use of Turkish territory.⁴⁴ They took their lead from EUCOM and developed their own country team.

Unfortunately, “officers and non-commissioned officers, who were comfortable with tactical-level operations but had never been trained on MOU negotiations or real estate acquisition, oversaw this coordination.”⁴⁵

CONCLUSION

Some of the miscalculation and underestimation of Turkish national interests relates to insufficient cultural awareness and engagement. U.S. diplomacy and EUCOM theater-strategic engagement of Turkey may have been too sporadic and inconsistent, waxing and waning with desires to influence other regional issues and states near Turkey. The U.S. can no longer take Turkish partnership, confined to the prism of NATO, or our ability to confront Iraq or other adjacent areas as a given, nor should we assume we can “buy” Turkish support when it is convenient. The national and theater-strategic levels of command would be wise to study the Turks more closely, understand their intense nationalism, growing domestic democratic influence, fear of an independent Kurdish state on their border, and their strong security interest in EU membership. These were perhaps key issues insufficiently addressed by U.S. diplomacy and theater engagement that ensured the Turks would say no. Furthermore, the U.S. must view the Turkish relationship as pivotal, deserving consistent attention, and press the EU to view Turkey in the same pivotal light. Turks see their relations with the west in a triangular way with competing pressures between Turkish, EU, and U.S. interests. They feel the pressure, are aware of the souring in Turkish-American relations, and may find it increasingly difficult to harmonize their interests with the U.S and EU if they can’t balance the divergent demands from each.⁴⁶

For years the Turks have essentially been “friends at the gate” asking for entry to the EU. But the European gatekeepers have been barring the gate. Does Europe want an enemy

at the gate instead? Samuel Huntington related “as people define their identity in ethnic and religious terms, they are likely to see an us versus them relation existing between themselves and people of different ethnicity or religion.”⁴⁷ Should we be too surprised if Turkey turns away and slips into a Muslim theocracy? If it does, that could damage NATO and begin a fresh crisis for Europe and the U.S. One alternative future with stability in several regions could be anchored with Turkey in the EU, strong member in NATO, economically stable, and politically democratic and secular. Alternatively, Turkey rebuffed by the EU, ignored by the U.S., with a failing economy, burgeoning population, and an emerging theocracy could drift dangerously into radical Islam and become an enemy at the gates of Europe. Which vision of Turkey will the U.S. and EU shape or fail to shape?

RECOMMENDATIONS

The responsibility to obtain diplomatic clearance and access rights negotiated with friendly countries for the strategic deployment of forces, to coordinate interagency and multinational cooperation, and to maintain alliance and regional relations resides at the interactive seam between the national and theater-strategic levels of command. While these are clearly significant responsibilities with no easy solutions vis-à-vis difficult allies like Turkey; there are some prescriptive recommendations that make sense. First, the U.S. should approach Turkey as one of several pivotal states in a revitalized theater engagement strategy for fostering multi-regional security. Second, the U.S. should press the EU for Turkey’s full membership as being in the long-term security interests of the U.S. and EU. Third, EUCOM should develop the TSCP’s to factor in the increasing influence of the EU and the CFSP on Turkish strategic calculus and security interests. Fourth, the effectiveness of previous and current TSCP’s vis-à-vis Turkey should be reassessed and the TSCP’s for both EUCOM and

CENTCOM should be more closely coordinated where key overlap occurs in mutual Areas of Interest (AOI). Lastly, relatively simple actions like more direct military to military contact with the Turkish General Staff (TGS) to possibly include a senior U.S. military liaison office assigned to the TGS might be a well considered and valuable investment for the future.

NOTES

¹ Khalilzad, Zalmay, Ian O. Lesser, and F. Stephen Larrabee, The Future of Turkish-Western Relations: Toward a Strategic Plan. (Santa Monica, CA: The RAND Corporation 2000), 48.

² The Atatürk legacy has been waning for several decades and the Turks have in fact shown strong support for the U.S. in operations in the Gulf War 1, the Balkans, OEF, and more recently and significantly in the Turkish out of area operations and leadership of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan. What they may have disagreed with most was the pre-emptive nature of the U.S. attack on Iraq. Most importantly, the Turks feared the spillover from a Kurdish uprising affecting Turkey.

³ Halford J. Mackinder, The Geographical Pivot of History. (London: The Royal Geographical Society 1951), 43.

⁴ Lord Kinross, Europa Minor: Journeys in Coastal Turkey. (New York: William Morrow and Company 1956), xi.

⁵ Zbigniew Brzezinski, "A Geostrategy for Eurasia," Foreign Affairs, (September/October), Volume 76, No. 5, 50-57.

⁶ F. Stephen Larrabee and Ian O. Lesser, Turkish Foreign Policy in an Age of Uncertainty. (Santa Monica, CA: The RAND Corporation 2003), 2-3.

⁷ Ibid. 187-190.

⁸ Robert Chase, Emily Hill, and Paul Kennedy, "Pivotal States and U.S. Strategy," Foreign Affairs, (January/February 1996), Volume 75, No. 1, 33-51.

⁹ Ibid. 47.

¹⁰ www.mfa.gov.il/mfa

¹¹ Dmitri Trenin, The End of Eurasia: Russia on the Border Between Geopolitics and Globalization. (Washington D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace 2002), 46-47.

¹² Gareth M. Winrow, "Pivotal State or Energy Supplicant?" Middle East Journal, (Winter 2003), Volume 57, No. 1, 76-92.

¹³ George W. Bush, The National Security Strategy of the United States of America. (Washington D.C. 2002), 19-20.

¹⁴ Roy Allison and Lena Jonson, ed., Central Asian Security (Washington, D.C. 2001), 213.

¹⁵ Central Intelligence Agency, Global Trends 2015: A Dialogue About the Future With Nongovernmental Experts, (Washington D.C. 2000), 58.

¹⁶ Henry Kissinger, Does America Need a Foreign Policy? (New York: Simon & Schuster 2001), 165.

¹⁷ www.mfa.gov.tr ,10

¹⁸ www.mfa.gov.tr/PrintPageE2.asp

¹⁹ www.mfa.gov.tr/Announcements/candidacy.htm, "Turkey's Candidacy for a Seat at the United Nations Security Council for the Term 2009-2010," (August 2003).

²⁰ Ibid. 109.

²¹ Ibid. 255.

²² Eric Rouleau, "Turkey's Dream of Democracy," Foreign Affairs, (November/December 2000), Volume 79, No. 6.

²³ Ibid. 257.

²⁴ Milan Vego, Operational Warfare (Newport, RI: Naval War College 2000), 40.

²⁵ Ibid, 40.

²⁶ Under the Turkish Parliamentary system, abstentions counted as no votes. Some informed sources viewed this outcome as ignorant failure on the part of the leadership of the ruling party (AK Party) to control and organize support. The leadership expected a yes vote in Parliament but allegedly did not fully understand the voting process under their own constitution. Consequently, even the Turkish leadership invalidly assumed that Parliament would vote yes and were subsequently surprised at the outcome since the 19 abstentions were counted as no votes.

²⁷ Vego, 19.

²⁸ Diyarbakir Airbase is a Turkish base in southeastern Turkey and was close to the TF IRON HORSE TAA.

²⁹ John Freely, The Western Shores of Turkey, (London: John Murray Publishers, Ltd.), 354 – 372. The port of Iskenderun in ancient times was known as Alexandretta, a port constructed by Alexander the Great to sustain his operations in the greater Middle East.

³⁰ Graphic obtained from RAND MR-1241-SRF and modified with overlay.

³¹ Thomas Weidley, Lt Col, USMC, CENTCOM J3 Plans/JOPES (CCJ3PJ) during OEF/OIF, interview by author 07 May 2004.

³² John R. S. Batiste, MG, USA, CG 1st Infantry Division, "1st ID Commander Thanks Soldiers, Civilians, Families." Crusader, 07 May 2003.

³³ Vego, 167-168.

³⁴ Weidley, interview by author. This observation was further substantiated by a senior official at the Department of State with direct knowledge of the negotiations with the Turks but who wishes his/her views not to be personally attributed.

³⁵ George Bush, The National Security Strategy of the United States of America, 29-30.

³⁶ Bob Woodward, Plan of Attack, (New York, NY: Simon and Schuster, 2004), 100-264.

³⁷ Woodward, 324-325.

³⁸ Philip H. Gordon and Jeremy Shapiro, Allies at War: America, Europe, and the Crisis Over Iraq, (New York, NY: McGraw-Hill, 2004), 136-175.

³⁹ James Jones, General, USMC, US European Command Facilities,” (Global Security.Org: 2004), www.globalsecurity.org/military/facility/eucom.htm

⁴⁰ James Jones, General, USMC, “USEUCOM Defense Information Group Press Briefing, 03 March 2003,” (Global Security.Org: 2003), www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/news/2003/mil-030303-eucom01.htm

⁴¹ A senior official at the Department of State with direct knowledge of the negotiations with the Turks but who wishes his/her views not to be personally attributed by name.

⁴² A senior official at EUCOM with direct knowledge of the negotiations with the Turks but who wishes his/her views not to be personally attributed by name. There was some military representation at least by February 2003. The TGS may have been negotiating from a position of Turkish assumptions that the U.S. could not and would not go to war with Iraq without Turkish access and base support.

⁴³ Weidley, interview by author.

⁴⁴ Batiste, 1.

⁴⁵ Patrick Warren and Michael Morrissey, “Turkey and an Army Forward,” *Military Review*, (Nov-Dec 2003). This article also notes that the USAREUR plan was published on 30 January 2003 while the USEUCOM plan lagged behind and was not published until 10 February 2003.

⁴⁶ H. Tarik Oguzlu, “Changing Dynamics of Turkey’s U.S. and EU Relations,” *Middle East Policy*, (Vol. XI, No. 1, Spring 2004). 98-105.

⁴⁷ Samuel Huntington, “The Clash of Civilizations,” *Foreign Affairs*, (Summer 1993), 29.

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